



Using ASYCUDA and ASYREC to facilitate and control the importation of Medicines and Medical Equipment in response to the novel coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19)



HOW will ASYREC support the response to COVID-19?

Over the past few weeks, COVID-19 has spread at an alarmingly swift rate around the globe, including in the world's most vulnerable countries. As case loads continue to increase, the pandemic will have a devastating impact, especially on communities affected by humanitarian crises. We know that combating this virus will require an unprecedented response from the United Nations and its partners. The increased demand for medical supplies has been exacerbated in recent days and is expected to continue increasing significantly in the imminent future.

In this context and in line with OCHA's vision of a world that comes together to help crisis affected people to rapidly get the humanitarian assistance they need, OCHA and UNCTAD have decided to join their efforts to automate simplified procedures for the prioritization and clearance of consignments of medicines and medical equipment to fight the virus.

On 30 January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) constituted a **Public Health Emergency of International Concern** (PHEIC). On 11 March 2020 the WHO characterized the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as a pandemic.

In his call for solidarity, the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, acknowledged that **“we are facing a global health crisis unlike any in the 75-year history of the United Nations – one that is spreading human suffering, infecting the global economy and upending people’s lives.”**

Developed by UNCTAD, in collaboration with OCHA, is the tool to support Member States in their fight against the disease outbreak and to speed up the clearance of materials to assist the most vulnerable.

ASYREC will facilitate the Cross-border Movement of Relief and Essential Supplies during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic by:



Enabling Customs Administrations to **quickly identify** the goods needed to combat the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak and other essential supplies requested by the government.



Supporting the **prioritization** of essential supplies based on identified priority needs.



Easily **distinguishing non-essential shipments against essential consignments** of the most needed medicines and medical equipment and/or essential supplies.



Covering the entire range of transactions related to recording the:

- Initiation of the State of Emergency and its estimated duration. Capability to extend the duration, if needed;
- Duration of the relief granted from import duties and VAT on importation for goods needed to combat the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak;
- Nature and quantities of the various goods admitted free of import duties and VAT with a view to combating the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak;
- List of eligible organisations by the competent authorities and conditions to be fulfilled.



Fast-tracking the Customs clearance of essential supplies, hence minimizing delays and reducing congestion at the border.



Coordinating controls using risk-management techniques, ensuring the full automated processing and release of goods by Customs, without delays (automatic release if no controls apply or when controls of Customs and OGAs have been finalized).



Enhancing coordination and cooperation between Customs and eligible organizations e.g.:

- Notifying stakeholders about the State of Emergency declared including its duration, the requested goods needed to combat the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak and their quantities (automatic, via email and/or via SMS);
- Providing capability for tracking and tracing the movements of essential supplies across borders (e.g.: **consignment status – arrived, under control, released**);
- Providing relevant organizations with an **accurate overview of the quantity of goods already imported, incoming shipments and the quantities** still to be imported into the country;
- Enabling governments to **have full control over import duty waivers and collection of duties and taxes during the trade recovery period.**

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